Olof Palme

30 January 1927 – 28 February 1986

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olof_Palme#/media/File:Palme_Trauer_1986.jpg

Close to midnight on 28 February 1986, he was walking home from a cinema with his wife Lisbet Palme in the central Stockholm street Sveavägen when he was shot in the back at close range. And the killer was……
Perhaps we know in one hour….Look at Swedish TV…

Assassination of Olof Palme

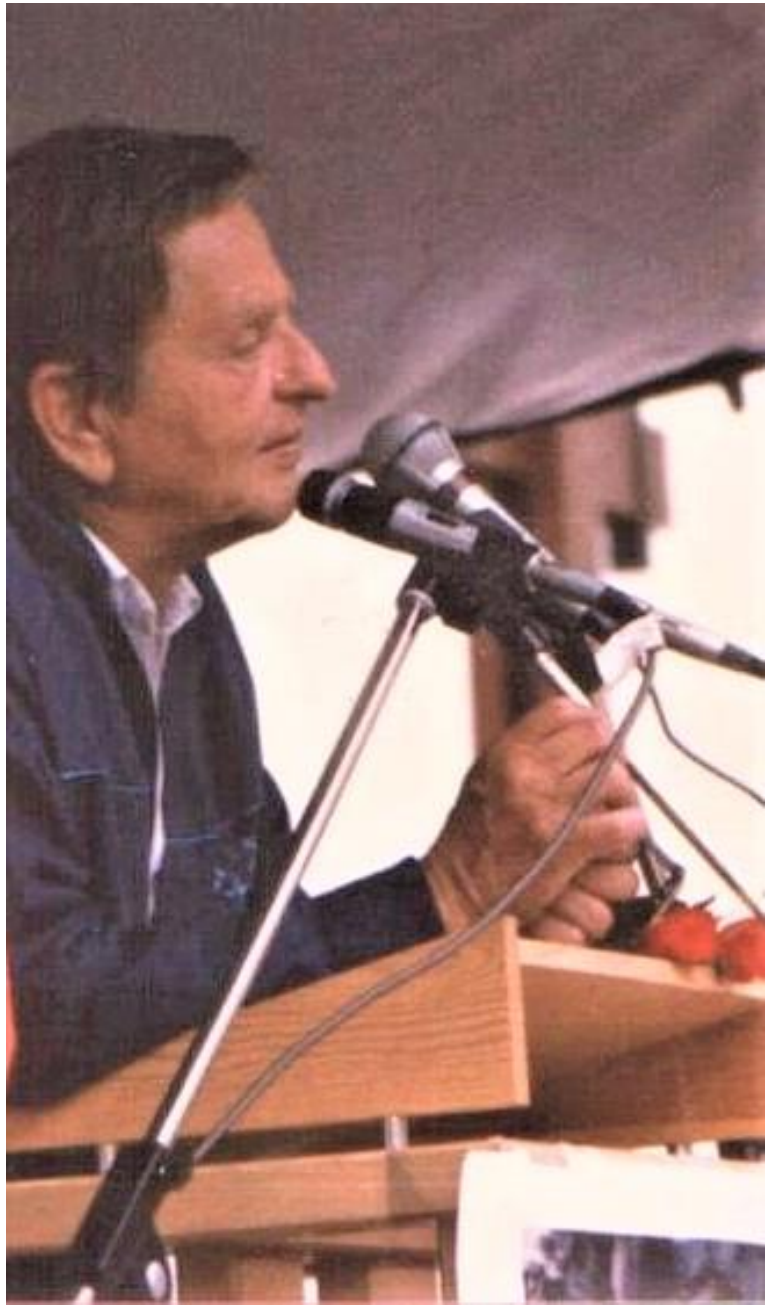
On Friday, 28 February 1986, at 23:21 CET (22:21 UTC), Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, was fatally wounded by a single gunshot while walking home from a cinema with his wife Lisbet Palme on the central Stockholm street Sveavägen. Lisbet Palme was slightly wounded by a second shot. The couple did not have bodyguards with them.

Christer Pettersson, who had previously been convicted of manslaughter, was convicted of the murder in 1988 after having been identified as the killer by Mrs Palme. However, on appeal to Svea Court of Appeal, he was acquitted. A petition for a new trial, filed by the prosecutor, was denied by the Supreme Court of Sweden. Pettersson died in late September 2004, legally declared not guilty of the Palme assassination.

Night of the assassination

Despite being Prime Minister, Palme sought to live as ordinary a life as possible. He would often go out without any bodyguard protection, and the night of his murder was one such occasion. Walking home from the Grand Cinema with his wife Lisbet Palme on the central Stockholm street Sveavägen, close to midnight on 28 February 1986, the couple was attacked by a lone gunman. Palme was fatally shot in the back at close range at 23:21 CET. A second shot wounded Mrs Palme.

Police said that a taxi driver used his mobile radio to raise the alarm, and two girls in a nearby car tried to assist. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital at 00:06 CET on 1 March 1986. The attacker escaped eastwards on the Tunnelgatan.



Cinema decision

Palme's decision to visit the Grand Cinema was made at very short notice. Lisbet Palme had discussed seeing a film when she was at work during the afternoon, and called her son, Mårten Palme, at 17:00 to talk about the film at the Grand Cinema. Olof Palme did not hear about the plans until at home, at 18:30, when he met with his wife, by which time Palme had already declined any further personal bodyguard protection from the security service. He talked to his son about the plans on the phone, and they eventually decided to join Mårten and his girlfriend, who had already purchased tickets for themselves to see the Swedish comedy Bröderna Mozart (The Mozart Brothers) by Suzanne Osten. This decision was made about 20:00. The police later searched Palme's apartment, as well as Lisbet's and Mårten's workplaces, for wire-bugging devices or traces of such equipment, but did not find any.

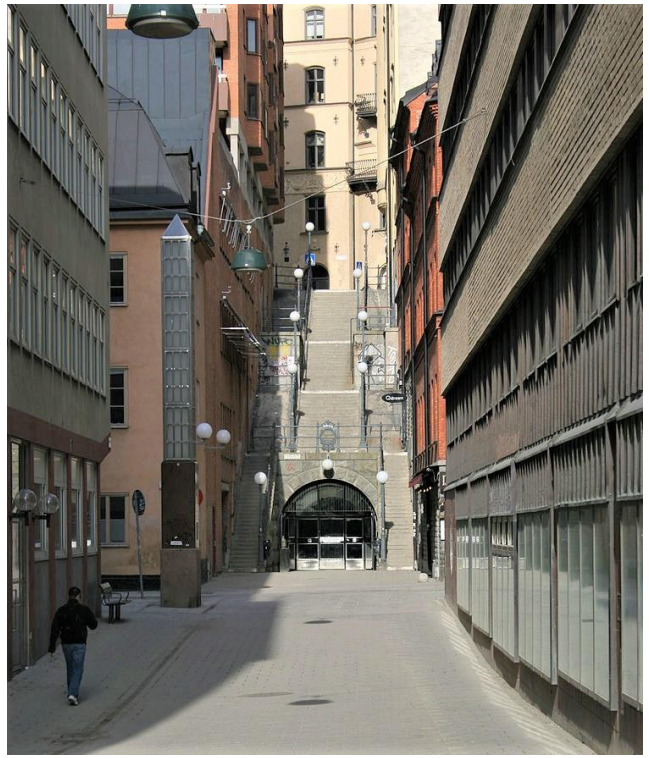
Grand Cinema

At 20:30 the Palmes left their apartment, unescorted, heading for the Gamla stan metro station. Several people witnessed their short walk to the station and, according to the later police investigation, commented on the lack of bodyguards. The couple took the subway train to the Rådmansgatan station, from where they walked to the Grand Cinema. They met their son and his girlfriend just outside the cinema around 21:00. Olof Palme had not yet purchased tickets which were by then almost sold out. Recognizing the prime minister, the ticket clerk wanted him to have the best seats, and therefore sold Palme the theatre director's seats

Murder

After the screening, the two couples stayed outside the theatre for a while but separated about 23:15. Olof and Lisbet Palme headed south on the west side of Sveavägen, towards the northern entrance of the Hötorget metro station. When they reached the Adolf Fredrik Church, they crossed Sveavägen and continued on the street's east side. They stopped a moment to look at something in a shop window, then continued past the Dekorima (later Kreatima, now Urban Deli) shop which was then located on the corner of Sveavägen and Tunnelgatan.

At 23:21, a man appeared from behind, shot Mr. Palme at point-blank range and fired a second shot at Mrs. Palme. The perpetrator then jogged down Tunnelgatan street, up the steps to Malmskillnadsgatan, and continued down David Bagares gata [street], where he was last seen.



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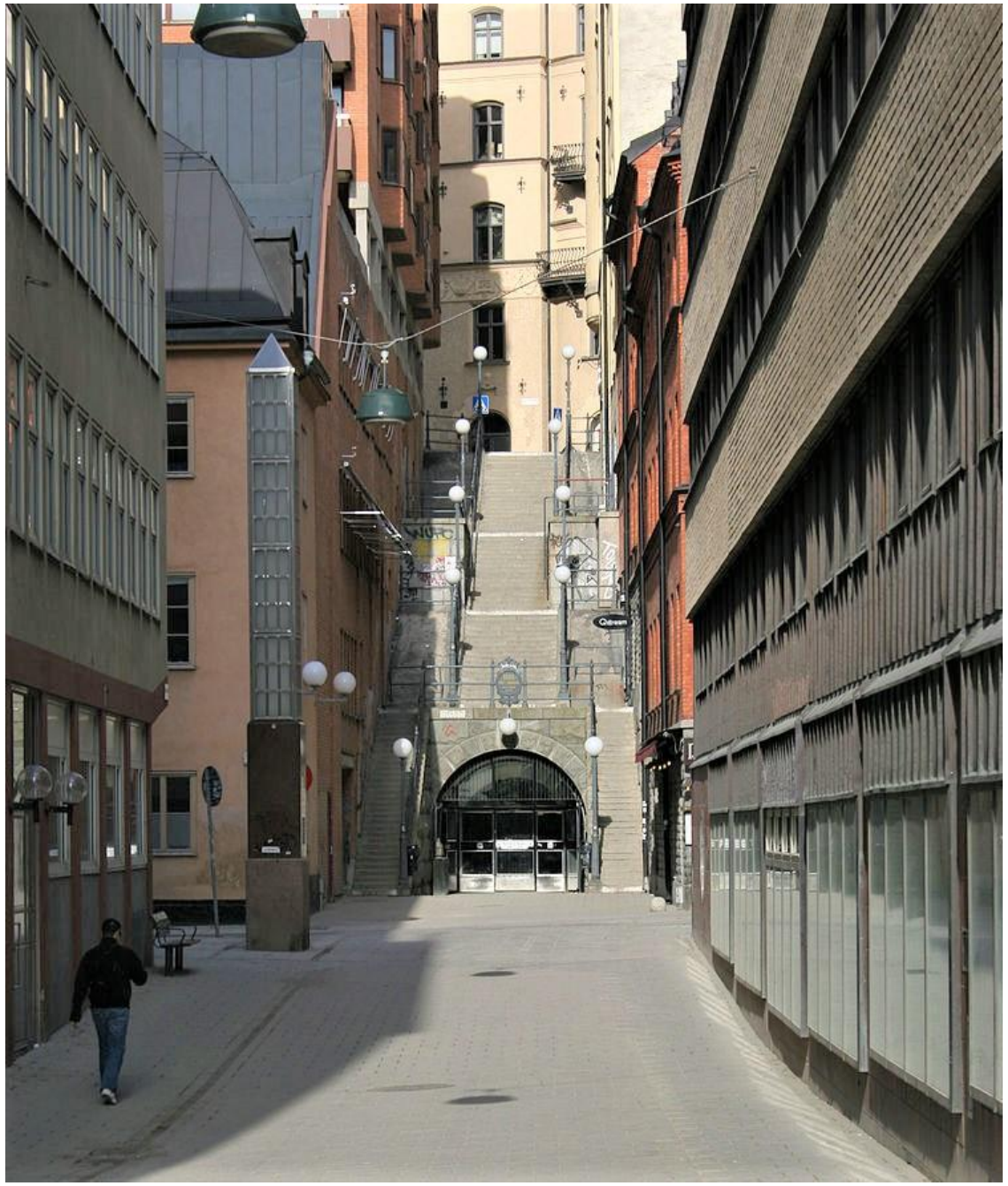


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_Olof_Palme#/media/File:Palmekiller_escape_route.jpg

Timeline

23:21:30 – Palme and his wife are shot.
23:22:20 – A witness calls the 90000 emergency line, but the call is misdirected and the caller is not put through to the police.
23:23:40 – A Järfälla Taxi switchboard operator calls the police dispatch centre to pass on a message from one of its drivers to the effect that someone has been shot at the corner Sveavägen and Tunnelgatan.
23:24:00 (approx.) – A police patrol, stationed a few hundred meters away, arrives on scene after being alerted by a second taxi driver who heard of the shooting on his taxi radio.
23:24:40 – The police are contacted by the emergency dispatch centre concerning the shooting on Sveavägen. The dispatch centre operator denies knowledge about any such events.
23:24:00–23:25:30 (approx.) – A patrol wagon – stationed at Malmskillnadsgatan, not far from the attacker's escape route – arrives and is ordered by the commanding officer to hunt for the attacker.
23:25:00 (approx.) – A passing ambulance is stopped and assists the victims.

23:26:00 – The police dispatch centre calls the SOS emergency centre to assure them they are informed about the events on the Sveavägen/Tunnelgatan intersection.
A third police patrol arrives.
A second ambulance arrives.
23:28:00 – The first ambulance leaves for the Sabbatsberg Hospital with both victims. Mrs Palme, not severely wounded, refuses to leave her husband.
23:30:00 – The police superintendent in charge at the scene informs the police dispatch centre that the prime minister was the victim.
23:31:40 – The emergency dispatch centre is informed that the ambulance has arrived at the hospital.
00:06:00 – Palme is pronounced dead.
00:45:00 – Deputy Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson arrives at Rosenbad.
01:10:00 – First radio broadcast about the murder.
04:00:00 – First television broadcast.
05:15:00 – The government holds a press conference.

Murder theories

Along with the length of the ensuing investigation, a number of alternative theories surrounding the murder surfaced. At the time, a murder under Swedish law was subject to prescription in 25 years. The law was later changed to prevent the Palme case from expiring, and thus the police investigation remained active for 34 years.

In February 2020, Krister Petersson, the prosecutor in charge of the investigation, stated that he expected to present a conclusive case and either bring charges or close the investigation within a matter of months.

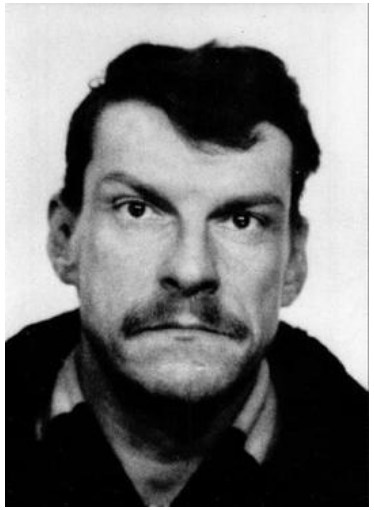
Yugoslavian connection

In January 2011 the German magazine Focus cited official German interrogation records in connection with another investigation from 2008 as showing that the assassination had been carried out by an operative of the Yugoslavian security service.

The 33-year-old

A Swedish extremist, Victor Gunnarsson (labeled in the media 33-åringen, "the 33-year-old"), was soon arrested for the murder but quickly released, after a dispute between the police and prosecuting attorneys. Gunnarsson had connections to various extremist groups, among these the European Workers Party, the Swedish branch of the LaRouche Movement.] Pamphlets hostile to Palme from the party were found in his home outside Stockholm.

Gunnarsson (labeled in the media 33-åringen, "the 33-year-old") was an early suspect for the assassination of Olof Palme on the late evening of 28 February 1986, in Stockholm, Sweden. He was taken in for questioning a first time on 8 March, but released the same evening, but taken in again on 12 March. On 17 March, he was taken into custody and the prosecutor made a request to the court to have Gunnarsson detained. After evidence against him had weakened, primarily due to less weight being placed on identification near the scene by one eyewitness, he was released on 11 April. However, Gunnarsson continued to be the subject of continued telephone surveillance for some period of time.



Christer Pettersson

Christer Pettersson

Mugshot of Christer Pettersson

In December 1988, almost three years after Palme's death, Christer Pettersson, a criminal, drug user and alcoholic, who had previously been imprisoned for manslaughter, was arrested for the murder of Palme. Picked out by Mrs Palme at a lineup as the killer, Pettersson was tried and convicted of the murder, but was later acquitted on appeal to the court of appeal.

Pettersson's appeal succeeded for three main reasons:

Failure of the prosecution to produce the murder weapon;

Lack of a clear motive for the killing;

Doubts about the reliability of Mrs Palme's testimony and "extremely gross errors" by the police in arranging the lineup.

Additional evidence against Pettersson surfaced in the late 1990s, mostly coming from various petty criminals who altered their stories but also from a confession made by Pettersson. The chief prosecutor, Agneta Blidberg, considered re-opening the case, but acknowledged that a confession alone would not be sufficient, saying:

South Africa

On 21 February 1986 — a week before he was murdered — Palme made the keynote address to the Swedish People's Parliament Against Apartheid held in Stockholm, attended by hundreds of anti-apartheid sympathizers as well as leaders and officials from the ANC and the Anti-Apartheid Movement such as Oliver Tambo. In the address, Palme said, "Apartheid cannot be reformed, it has to be abolished

Bofors and Indian connection

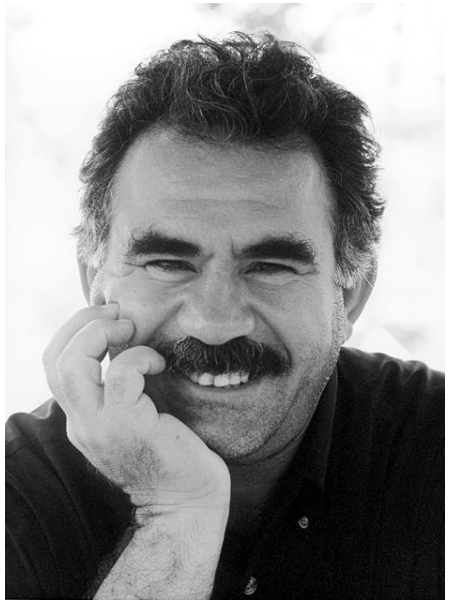
In his 2005 book Blood on the Snow: The Killing of Olof Palme, historian Jan Bondeson advanced a theory that Palme's murder was linked with arms trades to India.

Police conspiracy

In an article in the German weekly Die Zeit from March 1995, Klaus-Dieter Knapp presented his view of the assassination as a result of a conspiracy among Swedish right-wing extremist police officers.[23] According to this report, the murderer was identified by two witnesses who happened to be at the scene and who knew the murderer from previous encounters.

PKK

Abdullah Öcalan, leader of PKK, was accused of involvement in Olof Palme's assassination. In 1971, Olof Palme said that he blamed the fear of the masses on "anarchists and people with long hair [and] people with beards. Following up on this suggestion, Hans Holmér, the Stockholm police commissioner, worked with an intelligence lead passed to him (supposedly by Bertil Wedin) and arrested a number of Kurds living in Sweden. The PKK was allegedly responsible for the murder. The lead proved inconclusive however and ultimately led to Holmér's removal from the Palme murder investigation.



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The CIA and P2 connection

Another plot sees the involvement of the CIA and the Italian masonic lodge Propaganda Due led by Licio Gelli who wrote, in a telegram to Philip Guarino, that "the Swedish tree will be felled". Claims of CIA involvement in the assassination were made by Richard Brenneke, an Oregon businessman who said he was an ex-CIA operative, in a RAI Television report in July 1990. The CIA denied Brenneke's allegations calling them "absolute nonsense". Given "the outrageous nature of his claims", the CIA gave a public denial stating: "The agency flatly denies that Mr. Brenneke was ever an agent of the CIA or had any association with the CIA."

CIA?

"The Skandia man"

In 2018, journalist and investigator Thomas Petterson published first a series of articles in the Swedish magazine Filter and later a book, Den osannolika mördaren ("The unlikely assassin"), based on a long-running investigation into Palme's murder. Petterson's findings were also covered elsewhere in the Swedish media, for example by Expressen and Aftonbladet newspapers.

Petterson's theory is that Palme was shot by one Stig Engström, known as “the Skandia man" (Skandiamannen) after his employer, the Skandia insurance company, whose head office is located next to the murder scene. In earlier accounts Engström had been treated mostly as a witness, specifically (by his own assertion) the first eyewitness to arrive at the scene of the murder. He had also been briefly investigated by the police as a possible suspect, but this had subsequently been dropped. Petterson posits a scenario where Engström, who had a strong dislike of Palme and his policies, had chanced upon Palme in the street and shot him, possibly without premeditation.

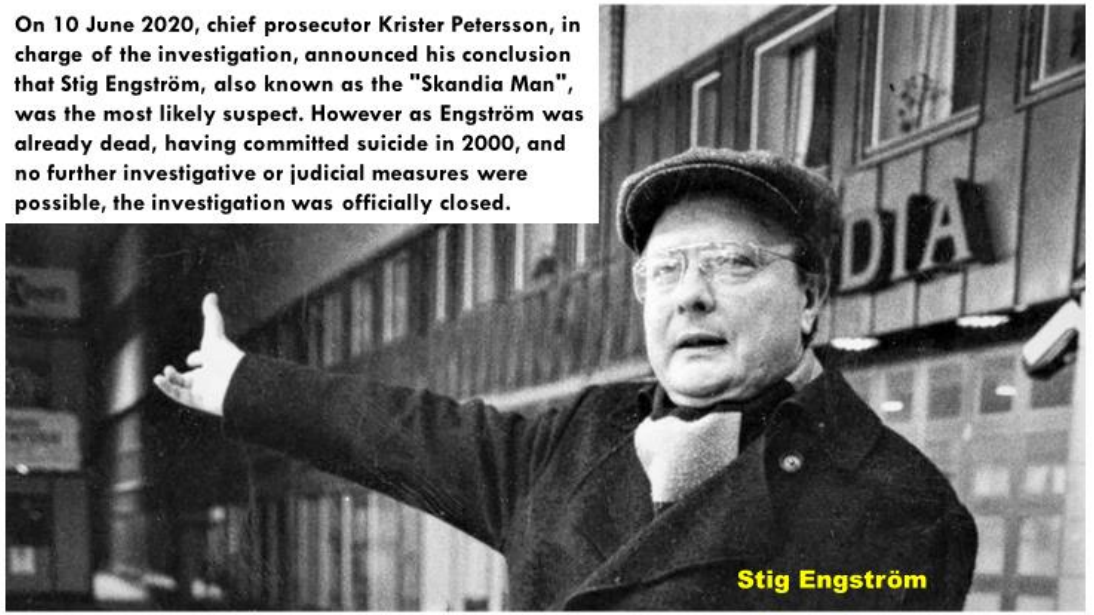
Engström is dead, having committed suicide in 2000.

Petterson suggests that evidence from the crime scene strongly points towards Engström as the assassin. Most significantly, several other witnesses gave descriptions of the fleeing killer that matched Engström, some of them very closely so, while no other witness placed Engström at the scene after the shots, even though Engström himself claimed to have been present from the beginning, spoken to Mrs. Palme and the police, and taken part in attempts to resuscitate the victim. Conversely, the only persons whom Engström was able to identify as having been present at the scene were those likely to have been encountered by the killer, while he was unable to identify those who had arrived after the shooting. Also, Engström's known movements during the evening, about which he provided false information when questioned, indicate he had the opportunity to find Palme at the cinema earlier that evening and later to follow him from there to the crime scene.

Soon after the murder, Engström began a series of media appearances in which he developed an increasingly detailed story of his involvement in the events and criticized the police. He claimed those witnesses who had described the killer had in fact been describing him, running to catch up with police officers in pursuit of the assassin. The police, meanwhile, became frustrated with Engström as an unreliable and inconsistent witness and soon classified him as a person of no interest. Petterson proposes Engström's media appearances were an opportunistic and ultimately successful tactic devised to mislead investigators and later to gain attention as an important witness neglected by the police.

Stig Engström

On 10 June 2020, chief prosecutor Krister Petersson, in charge of the investigation, announced his conclusion that Stig Engström, also known as the "Skandia Man", was the most likely suspect. However as Engström was already dead, having committed suicide in 2000, and no further investigative or judicial measures were possible, the investigation was officially closed.



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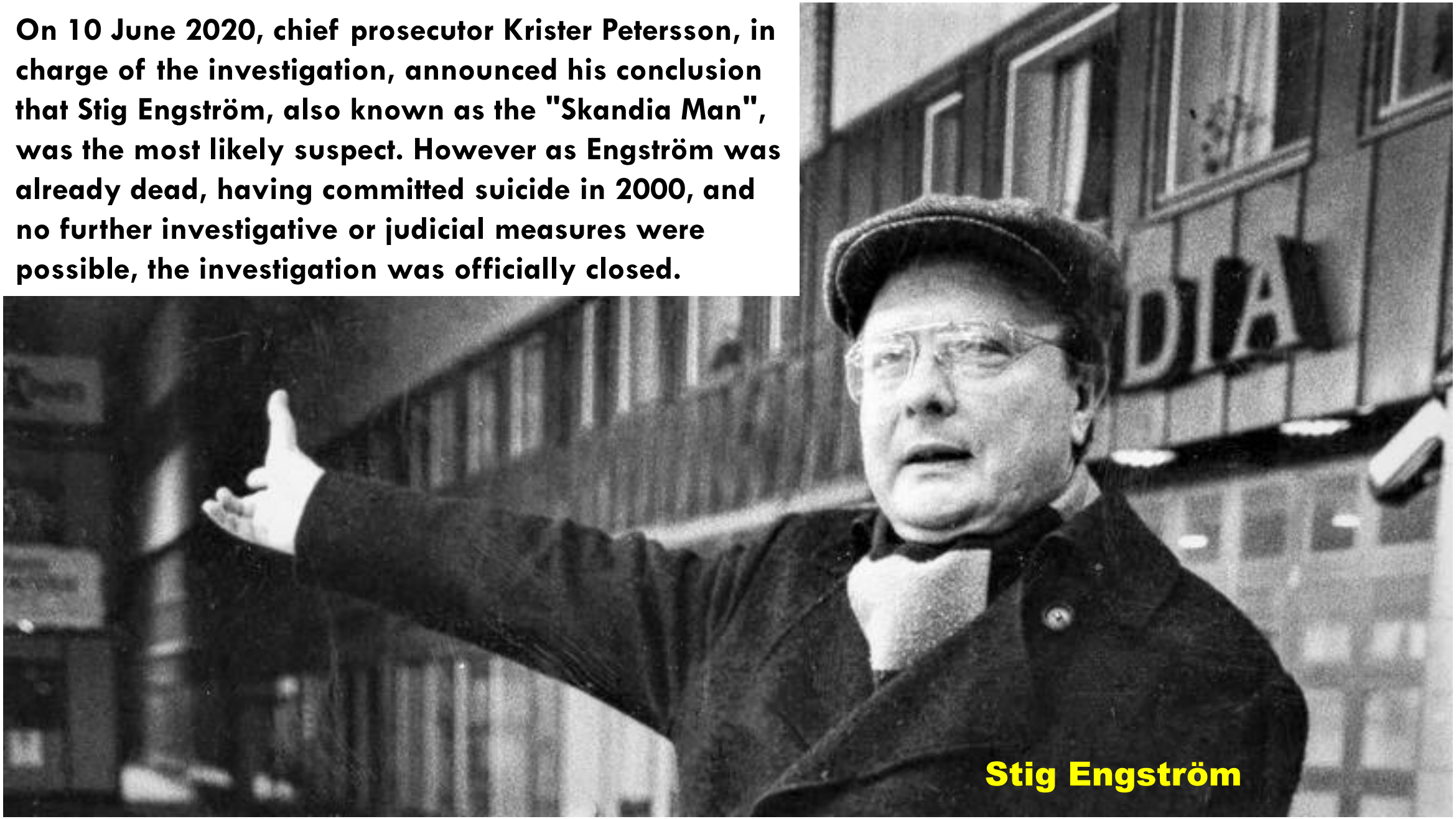


Stig Folke Wilhelm Engström (26 February 1934 – 26 June 2000) was a Swedish graphic designer. Engström is one of the people known to have been present at the scene of the assassination of Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, on 28 February 1986. Initially treated by the police as an eyewitness, and at one point as a potential suspect, Engström has later been proposed as the assassin by Swedish writers Lars Larsson and, separately, Thomas Pettersson.

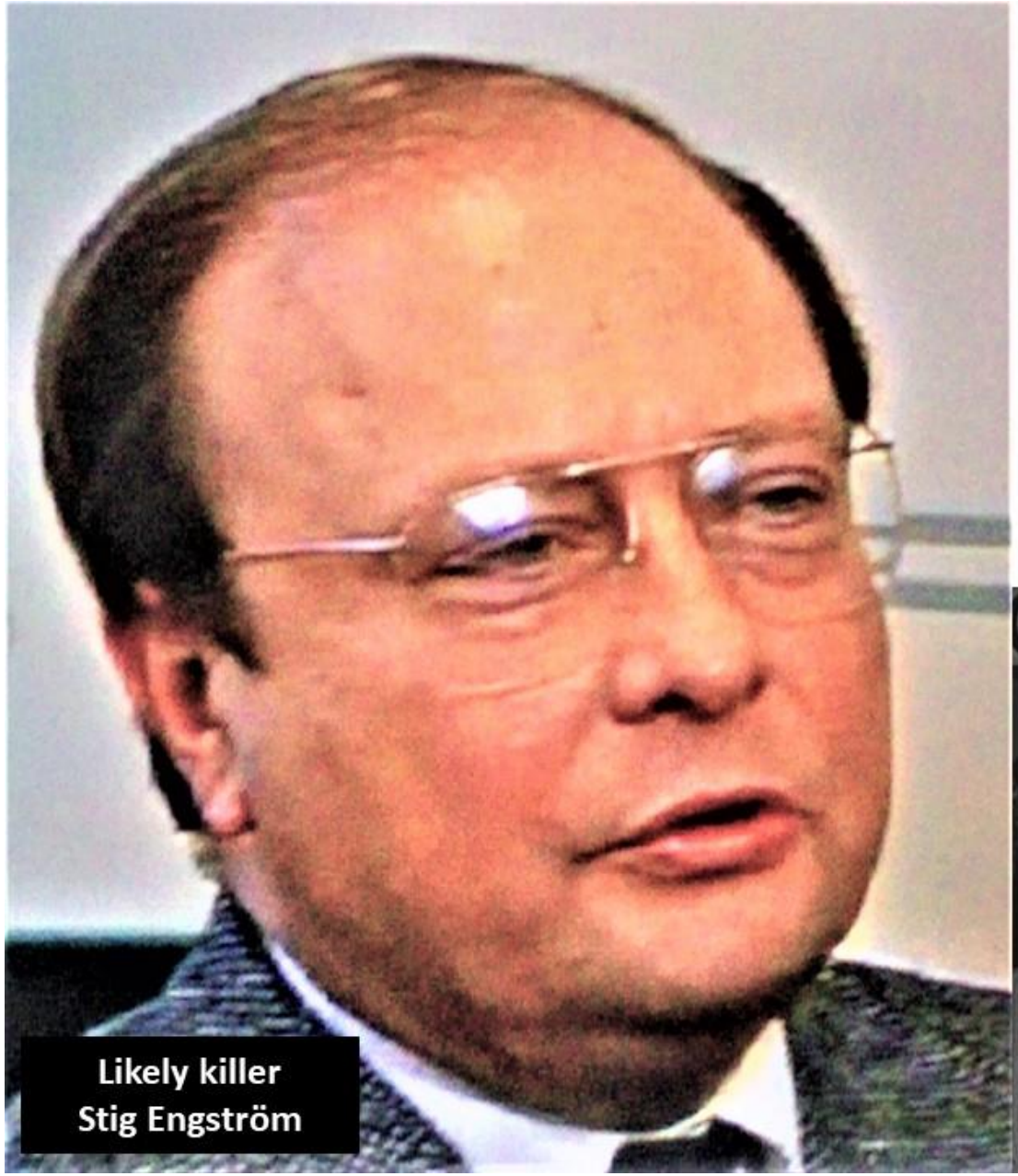
In line with Swedish media reporting practices of not disclosing the names of suspects, Engström was dubbed The Skandia man (Swedish: Skandiamannen), since he arrived at the crime scene from the nearby head office of the Skandia insurance company, where he worked. Engström was confirmed as the likely killer of Olof Palme, at a press conference by prosecutor Krister Peterson on 10 June 2020.

Stig Engström
B. 26 Feb. 1934
D. 26 June, 2000
Confirmed as a likely killer of Olof Palme

Stig Engström

Stig Engström was born in Bombay, India to Swedish parents who came from Småland His mother, Ruth Engström, was from Nybro; his father, Folke Engström, worked for Ivar Kreuger. In 1926, his father got the opportunity from his employer to move to India to start up production there.

During the couple's time in Bombay, they gave birth to Stig Engström in 1934; his brother was born in 1940 in Calcutta. They grew up in British India and had a nanny, a chef and a gardener. Engström returned to Sweden when he was twelve years old and lived with relatives of the family until his parents also returned a few years later. He attended an elite school, but while he showed artistic and athletic talent, he did not excel academically and never graduated or went to university. Engström did military service before starting his studies to become a graphic designer. For some time, he worked for the Swedish military on illustrations for field manuals. During the late 1960s, he was hired by Sveriges Radios förlag and later by the insurance company Skandia to do designer work for them in Stockholm, a position which he held until retirement.



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Olof Palme

was a Swedish politician and statesman. A longtime protégé of Prime Minister Tage Erlander, Palme led the Swedish Social Democratic Party from 1969 until his assassination in 1986, and was twice Prime Minister of Sweden, heading a Privy Council Government from 1969 to 1976 and a cabinet government from 1982 until his death. Electoral defeats in 1976 and 1979 marked the end of Social Democratic hegemony in Swedish politics, which had seen 40 years of unbroken rule by the party.

Cost of investegation 600 million SEK

While Petterson's theory is built on circumstantial evidence, he suggests it might be possible to prove Engström's guilt conclusively by tracing and examining the murder weapon. According to Petterson's theory, the revolver was likely to have been one legally owned by an acquaintance of Engström's, an avid gun collector.

The "Skandia man" theory had already previously been suggested by Lars Larsson in his 2016 book Nationens fiende (literally, "The enemy of the nation"), but this received only limited attention at the time.

On 10 June 2020, the Swedish Prosecution Authority confirmed The Skandia Man as the perpetrator. The cost of investigation 600 millon SEK.
Aprox 50 000 SEK a day in 34 years.